THE
Sixth Catholick Letter,

Laying open the Folly of the *Continuator's* extravagant Boasting, and the Malice of his wilful Forgeries.

In which also,

The Accounts between *J. S's* two Adversaries, Dr. *Stillingfleet*, and Dr. *Tillotson* are exactly cast up: A Summary given of the Beginning, Progress, and Final Issue of the Contest about the Catholick *Rule* of *Traditions*; and of the *Charge* made good against them, that their *No-Principles* did leave all Christian Faith in a Possibility of being *False*; of which they *discharg'd* themselves no otherwise than by quitting the Lists, and by giving up their Cause.

By *John Sergeant.*

[1688]

With Allowance.

The Preface to the Reader.

THE *Controversies on both sides growing very numerous in the Reign of the late King* James, *it was thought fit by those of the Reformation, to publish from time to time, a kind of* History *or Narrative of the Performances of both the contending Parties. It was not to be expected that an Adversary should observe the* Indifferency, *which is essentially necessary to a true Historian, nor represent things* Impartially: *Yet the Author of those Narratives did to a fair Degree deliver things with a handsome* Decorum, *as much as could be well expected from one who was a* Party, *and in such Circumstances. But, he giving over, a furious Zealot (as we were inform'd, by name,* Dr. W-) *took upon him to* continue *that Work, and accordingly call'd himself, the* Continuator of the History of the Controversie. *What a kind of* Historian *he was, and how* Impartial *a Lover of* Truth *will be seen hereafter. His Language was so Foul, Opprobrious and Invective against every Catholick Writer, none excepted; and particularly his Falshoods against my self, were so manifestly wilful and injurious, and withal so senseless, being*

being confutable by open Matter of Fact, that my Genius leading me to have little reſpect for him who had none at all for Truth, I could not but think I did not owe him the Civility to mince or diſguiſe his Miſ-deſerts, but to call his Faults by their own right, tho courſe, Names; and, to retort upon him, with better Juſtice, ſome of thoſe contumelious Expreſſions, he had unjuſtly beſtowed on others.

I may juſtly preſume that all ingenuous Readers, who have peruſed my Books, will acknowledge that I do only avail my ſelf by my Reaſons and Arguments, and am unwillingly drawn to anſwer Railing with juſt Reprehenſions; and that only the Neceſſity of preſerving my Reputation did force me upon ſuch Methods as are proper to defend it. My Caſe was this, Dr. St. for want of better Arguments, had recourſe to the Roman Inquiſition; and, truſting to a Libel, under the Name of Lominus, objected that my Doctrine was held at Rome to be Heretical, and was condemned there as ſuch, and that my ſelf was excommunicated, cited to appear, and what not. Hereupon I clear'd my ſelf in my Fifth Catholick Letter, from p. 8. to p. 32. And by unconteſtable matter of Fact, and by the Teſtimony of the Greateſt and moſt Learned Men (few excepted) in God's Church. I manifeſted that my Doctrine was held to be Sound and Catholick; and, by the whole courſe of that Tranſaction, that there was not one word of Truth in that whole Story: This ſtunn'd Dr. St. ſo that he never objected it ſince. But this hot-headed Continuator was ſuch a Monſter of Inſincerity, that when he was, as a Faithful Hiſtorian, to give a true Account of what I had alledg'd for my ſelf ſo largely, particularly and authentickly in that Fifth Letter, he conceals all I had there alledged, and charges the ſame again, as if I had ſaid nothing. Which is the ſame, as if, when a Perſon, accus'd of Murther or Theft, had been acquitted in open Court, after a deliberate Examination or Hearing of all that could be objected or prov'd, an idle Fellow ſhould ſtill bawl out aloud, that he was, notwithſtanding, an errant Murtherer or Thief, without bringing any thing at all to make good his Calumny. Having thus Apologiz'd for my plain and honeſt refuting ſuch a Therſites, and expoſing him as he deſerves, I remit thee to the following Letter, where thou wilt meet with more ample Satisfaction.

THE

THE

Sixth Catholick Letter,

To the CONTINUATOR of the *History* of our Controverſies.

SIR,

1. WHat you are I do not *know*; (tho' 'tis ſaid your Name is Dr. *W.*) nor have I any reaſon, from your carriage, to think you are much *worth* the knowing; and you did very prudently to maſk your ſelf under the diſguiſe of a *private and obſcure hand*, to hide the bluſhes which common ſhame would otherwiſe force even into a forehead of the blackeſt complexion. It is eaſie to diſcern by your furious Zeal, your Falſifying humour, and your Patronizing ſo fiercely that Party which maintains that *All Chriſtian Faith* which is held now *may be Falſe*, that you are far from the Principles of a Genuin Church of England-man, farther than a good Benefice may perhaps give you a Vocation, but rather ſome hot-brain'd *Calviniſt* in *Maſquerade*, parboil'd by the ſcalding Zeal againſt Popery into a ſtanch Proteſtant, which like Lobſters change their *hew* and *outward appearance*, but not their *Nature*. The Character you have given your ſelf by your behaviour in your 41ſt. page; is that you are a *wilful* and *Bold* Calumniator; who, truſting to the eaſie *Credulouſneſs* of your Friends, and relying on the Great *Noiſe* of *Epiſt. Dedicat.*

your numerous Party are able to make, value not a ſtraw what *manifeſt Falſhoods* you publiſh. And, which is the *worſt* Quality of a *Forger*, that you are a *Careleſs*, *Open*, and *Confident* One. If this can be plainly made good againſt you, I am ſure your Rude and Unchriſtian Carriage towards me, juſtifies me for letting the World know you are guilty of theſe Faults of the firſt Magnitude. What prejudice this may do to your Deſcants all along upon other pieces writ by Catholicks you are to look to, and ſhould have better conſider'd when you thus *ſacrific'd* your *Conſcience* to your *Malice*; for if this be prov'd upon you, it will here ſtand upon *Publick Record*, and like your fellow *Knights of the Poſt*, you are never to be believ'd in any thing you ſay either here or hereafter. Certainly Sir, a little more Temperance had done your Cauſe far more Right: For every Man of an ordinary Prudence will vehemently ſuſpect your ſharp Reflexions are meerly *Romantick*, ſeeing you make the Proteſtant *Knight* ſtill beat the Popiſh *Giant*. What Man of common Reaſon will, do you think, believe you, that the Catholick Party have in none of their Books ſpoke a word of Senſe, or that (as you tell the Reader with much aſſurance) *never was Cauſe more intirely baffled*: Nay, in the full career of your ranting exaggerations, you aver without Fear, Shame or Wit, that *your very Footmen themſelves eſteem themſelves an equal match for Jeſuits*; and leſt the Credit of your *Learned Footmen* ſhould ſink, or the ſober part of the World ſhould look upon them as ſelf-conceited Puppies for having ſuch a *high Eſteem* of themſelves, you hold them up by the chin, and tell us very ſadly, that *you think they have ſatisfied the World they are not miſtaken* in this opinion of themſelves. Now, all this while there was but *one* Footman, whoſe name,

Epiſt. to the Reader.

Ibid.

Ibid.

name, to *ridicule* a Roman Catholick Writer, was prefix'd to a Pamphlet, which in all likelihood might have been written by ſome ſuch ſhamming Gentleman as your ſelf. I wonder you did not add *Proteſtant Broom-men*, *Kennel-rakers* and *Chimney-ſweepers*; for none can doubt but ſome of theſe may have as much Knaviſh wit as a *Footman*. But it was your Kindneſs to Catholicks not to tyrannize too much over them, or depreſs them with ſuch ignoble compariſons; and therefore you did them the *honour* to allow them fit *matches* to run a Controverſy-race with your thrice *Reverend Footmen*. And, by your Diſcourſe, 'tis a *high honour* too; for you tell us p. 45. that the R. F. *Sabran is now grown more famous in the World from his new Antagoniſt the Footman*. I hope I may uſe your own words ſo I apply them better; and tell the Reader that I admire at *the heat and bitterneſs of that little Satyr*, your ridiculouſly malicious Self. P. 10.

2. Notwithſtanding your *ill performance*, I frankly acknowledge that a *Hiſtory* of what Books have been writ *pro* and *con* in our Controverſies is a very laudable *Deſign*; and had you obſerv'd the impartiality of an *Hiſtorian* by only relating what had been done in that kind, and then refer'd your *Reader* to the *Books* you mention'd, and left *him* to judge of the performances on both ſides by thoſe Books themſelves, you had deſerv'd a due Commendation. But you could not content your ſelf with matter of *Fact*, but would needs enter upon the matter of *Right* too; and this, with Reflexions wholly made up of Vapour, Inſolence, ſilly Amplifications, Ironies, Invectives, and oft-times open Falſhoods. For example, *Never did Man ſet Pen to Paper* (as *F. Sabran*) *with ſuch a ſtock of Ignorance and Confidence together*, p. 4. *whoſe ſtock is Confidence*, p. 45.

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He has neither Learning, nor good Manners, ibid. One would wonder by the way, Sir, where *your* Breeding lies. But as for the *Repreſenter*, he is quite ſtript of Honeſty and Wit both.--- *He ſeems* (ſay you) to *have ſtruggled a little with himſelf before he could get the better of his Conſcience*, p. 11. *The Confidence of this vain Man---He* (His Proteſtant Antagoniſt) *has thought fit to give him up as a priviledged Perſon, who is paſt either Senſe or Modeſty, or hopes of being reclaim'd*, p. 12. That is, in more honeſt terms, his Antagoniſt acknowledges himſelf *baffled*, and I perceive by your p. 4. that you are about *giving up F. Sabran* too upon the ſame ſcore. Again--- *that honeſt ſincere Man that cannot endure falſe dealing, but was dropt down from Heaven to be the Scourge and Cenſor of a Licentious Age--- by a ſtrange kind of Metamorphoſis from an Angel of Light transforming himſelf into a Spirit of Darkneſs*, p. 43. And laſtly, that *He is an Aſs in a Lyons Skin*, p. 44. Pray good ſweet angry Sir, lay aſide your Paſſion awhile, and do but conſider a little how ridiculous you make your ſelf, and clap the long Ears on your own Noddle. Had you *profeſt* your ſelf a *Therſites*, and a Maſter of Invective Rhetorick, none would have wonder'd at you for following your Vocation; but the Jeſt is, you will needs make your ſelf all this while a *Maſter of Ceremonies*, to teach others *good manners*, and yet the Academy of Scolds at *Billingſgate* cannot furniſh one with baſer and fouler Language. Were you writing againſt the Perſon, and had at the ſame time prov'd his Demerit anſwerable to your Words, then indeed *Smart* Language, ſo it be *True*, may ſometimes *paſs*, nay be *needful*; but to fall upon him ſo ſeverely in an undue occaſion, and with ſuch a ſerious Career of extravagant Railing, does too viſibly proceed from the P. 45.

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Impotency and *Uneaſineſs* of your Paſſion. Could a mad Dog ſpeak, I know not (tho' you perhaps may) what worſe Language he could foam out than *Aſs* and *Devil*. Whence *I Congratulate to the Gentleman* the happy *Omen*, that he could deſerve *the heat and bitterneſs of ſuch little Satyrs*. Thus our impartial Hiſtorian treats the *one* Party; but on the *other* he beſtows all along the Magnificent Titles of *Excellent*, *Learned*, *Ingenious*, P. 20. *Incomparable*, and all-to-be Reverences them with his Termagant Hyperbolical Commendations. And now, Reader, is it a Straw's matter whether ſuch a Writer praiſes or reviles a Man, or rather are not his *Elogiums* a *Diſgrace*, and his *Invectives* a high *Honour* and *Commendation* in the opinion of any *Moderate* Reader?

3. *My* turn comes next; and any Man will ſee how Dr. *St.* and his good Friends are nettled, by your pelting me ſo unmercifully.

4. Your firſt Falſhood is, that I begun to *carry on* P. 40. *this Controverſy* after the Reflecter had writ *his*. This I affirm to be *Untrue*; for, the *Firſt* Catholick Letter was alſo *mine*. And, tho' my Name was not to it, yet I ſtill *own'd* it for *mine* in my following pieces. Which if you *read*, you could not but *ſee*; if you did *not*, you are a ſtrange Diſregarder of Truth and Sincerity, to paſs ſuch raſh Cenſures upon Books you never ſo much as *read*. And, if this were ſo, as I much fear, it puts me into ſome doubt whether you ever read *any* of the Catholick Books you *Cenſur'd* ſo *deeply*; but, like a right honeſt Man, right or wrong, ſhot your Bolts at random.

5. Your Second Falſhood is, that Dr. *St.* has reply'd Ibid. to my firſt Four Letters; and this is a moſt notorious Banter. For firſt, it is ſhown in my Fifth Letter,

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Page by Page to every Examiners Eye, from p. 154. to p. 173. that he has omitted ſo much as to *take notice of* (much more to *anſwer*) Thirty Nine parts of Forty of my firſt and third Letters. Next, *he* owes me an Anſwer to the Second. Thirdly, he has not anſwer'd one word to my *Fourth*; and ſo *two* or *three* ſhameleſs *Untruths* muſt ſerve for an *Anſwer* to thoſe *four* Treatiſes; which, I ſuppoſe, is *the modern way of Controverſy* you told us of, p. 20. However, you tell us, p. 40. that Dr. *St's* piece was an *Excellent Diſcourſe*; that is, 'tis one of your *Geeſe* metamorphos'd to a *Swan*, by your gloſſy Commendations. However, it diſcover'd my *Vanity*, and that's enough in all Conſcience. But Sir, are you a Chriſtian, even in a Latitudinarian ſenſe, who call it *Vanity* to aſſert that the Faith now held by Chriſtians is truly Chriſt's, and conſequently *True*, or that it has Grounds to prove it true that it did deſcend from him, which is the Grand Conteſt between Dr. *St.* and me? And on this occaſion let me ask you how you durſt tell the World in the Title to your Dedicatory, that a Book writ to maintain the *Poſſible Falſhood of Faith*, is writ *In Defence of the Church of England*; as if it were her Doctrine, that *all Chriſtian Faith may be a Lye*; or how a Chaplain to an Arch-Bp. durſt approve a Pamphlet, that makes that Church guilty of that half Atheiſtical Tenet, which her beſt Writers and moſt genuine Sons ever abhorr'd. But —— *Hæc eſt hora veſtra, & poteſtas tenebrarum.*

6. Your Third Falſhood is, that I writ *Contradictions*, which has been confuted at large in an elaborate Diſcourſe (Fifth Cath. Letter, p. 8. to p. 18.) where every particular Contradiction objected is ſolv'd by a clear ſtate of the Queſtion, which the Learned Dr. would needs miſtake throughout his whole Anſwer.

ſwer. However, *it was expected this would have ſtopt my mouth.* But alas, when *vain* Men *promiſe* to themſelves Unreaſonable things, how ſtrangely their Expectations *fail* them! 'Tis not *Nonſenſe* clad in *fine words*, nor all the Spiteful Reflexions of Men, who, I ſee plainly, have not the leaſt value for Truth, that can ſhock me or fright me from defending it.

7. Your Fourth Falſhood is, that the *Blackloiſt Hereſie was now like to be brought on the Stage again*; meaning, that my Doctrin about Tradition was *peculiar* to Mr. *Blacklow*. The contrary to which I have ſhown to every honeſt Reader's eye in a particular Treatiſe (*Clypeus Septemplex* p. 209. to p. 250.) and the very Reverend F. *Warner* in his * *Anti-Haman* tells Dr. *Burnet* he *diſcovers his Ignorance* in ſaying it was *newly invented.* Laſtly, my Fifth Letter p. 24. has foreſtall'd this Objection. But no Sincerity is to be expected from ſuch willful Aſſerters of baffled Falſhoods. Diſprove a Calumny never ſo evidently, all they do, inſtead of invalidating our Reaſons or Teſtimonies, is *to ſay the ſame over again* with a ſteel'd Impudence, as if *nothing* had been alledg'd againſt it.

* *See Third Cath. Letter p.* 21.

8. Your Fifth Falſhood is, that I have formerly *eat my words.* P. 41.

Your Sixth, that I did this, *when I was cited to* Rome *to be cenſur'd for thoſe dangerous Heretical Propoſitions which I am now again broaching in* England. Both of which are *moſt Impudent Untruths.* This appears both by the kind *Monitio* ſent me from the *Sacred Congregation*, where 'tis manifeſt they were aware that I had *declar'd* my ſelf to ſpeak [*de Regula Externa Fidei ſeu de Traditione Eccleſiæ*] of the *Extrinſical Rule of Faith* or *the Tradition of the Church.* As alſo, that in the circumſtance of our Controverſy I had maintain'd [*de-* *Clypeus Septemplex. p.* 10.

here eam esse evidentem] *this Rule ought to be Evident.* All which they allow'd, and requir'd no more of me but only that *Mindful of the words of the Apostle* [*I am a Debtor both to the* Greeks *and to the* Barbarians, *both to the Wise and to the Unwise*] *I would clear some Propositions contained something obscurely in my Books*, by reason of the ambiguity of the word *Evidence*, *viz.* whether it was meant of the Evidence of the *Mysteries*, or of the *Motives* to Faith; which Mistake bred the whole Misunderstanding. This I did by a hundred Instances, and most pregnant and convincing Reasons in my *Declaratio*; and, this done, those *severest* Judges of *Unsound* Doctrine, remain'd *satisfy'd*; and to your greater confusion I have the Original of the *Monitio* and the other Records in my hands still. For farther Evidence that I was neither put to *Eat my Words*, or *Retract* the least tittle in my Books, nor was ever *Cited to Rome*, I could allege those Right Reverend Personages, Bishop *Leyburn*, and Bishop *Gifford*; of which the former was at *Rome* all the time of the Contest: The other, though at *Paris*, yet was acquainted with all the particulars of it: As also those Reverend Divines mention'd *Fifth Cath. Letter*. p. 21. who examin'd the Propositions chiefly objected; and attested under their Hands, that their Sense was *not* in my Books but the direct contrary: I could produce likewise Multitudes of *Other* Persons; both Divines and Lay-men, of *unblemisht* Credit, who can witness the same. And yet this frontless Man thinks to out-face the World with an open and manifest Lye, to second Dr. *St*'s wilful Forgeries; though he knows how I answer'd in my *Clypeus Septemplex* and *Vindiciæ* what the Dr. for want of better Stuff, did cite out of his Friend *Lominus*, and that in the first Section of my fifth Catholick Letter I

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particularly ſhew'd by unqueſtionable Authority every tittle of Dr. *Stillingfleet*'s Calumnies to be moſt falſe: And, laſtly, what Approbations from the moſt Knowing and moſt Orthodox Catholicks of the beſt Quality my Books have had. Which done, I cloſe * my Diſcourſe with this Recapitulation. [The Sum of my preſent Defence is this: "Eight "Divines of great Repute, appointed by the Arch- "biſhop of *Paris*, and admitted by my Adverſary him- "ſelf, do unanimouſly atteſt that the Senſe condemn'd "is not in my Books, but the contrary. My Judge "clears me; the Cenſurers are commanded to make "me Satisfaction. The Higheſt Tribunal allows my "Plea and acquits me. Primates, Archbiſhops, Bi- "ſhops, the *Sorbon*, eminent Divines, and even thoſe "who take another way in their Writings, approve "and commend my Doctrine, and moſt of them in ve- "ry high and extraordinary expreſſions. My own Supe- "rior does the ſame; nay, even thoſe who formely were "highly prejudiced, declare themſelves ſatisfy'd in it. "So that poor Dr. *St.* is left alone to ballance againſt "all this weighty Authority, with one *Lominus*, a "meer *Utopian* or Man in the Moon; on whoſe ſole "*No-Authority* he grounds all his ſenſeleſs Calumnies.] All which particulars were ſhewn there at large. To enforce thoſe *Teſtimonials*, I added [I deſire the Rea- "ders to reflect that thoſe Judges, Approvers and "Commenders of my Books and Doctrine liv'd gene- "rally in *diverſe* and far diſtant Nations, were of *different* "Faculties and Univerſities, of different Educations, *diffe-* "*rent* Orders, and (to ſome degree) of *different* Principles "and Intereſts, *diverſe* of them utterly unknown to "*Me*, or I to *Them*. So that, 'tis impoſſible to ima- "gine that any thing but the force of *Truth*, and the "*Integrity* of my way proving the Certainty of our

* Fifth Cath. Letter, p. 30.

"Faith, as to its having been taught by *Jeſus Chriſt*, "could make them *conſpire* to *allow* or *abet* my Books "ſo *heartily* and *unanimouſly*. Nor could there be any "human Inducements to make them ſo ſtrangely par-"tial to a *Private* Man, every way inconſiderable, and "of *no* Eſteem at all, but what my *Writings* and *Prin-ciples* gave me.] And now, Reader, admire at the Impudence of this Man, and be Judge thy ſelf whether he has not forſworn all common Honeſty, and re-nounc'd all Shame, who, after all this and much more read by him in the Book he is here cenſuring, does, before any Man *has* diſprov'd one tittle of it, or (I am ſure) *can*, in this very Book of his, where he pretends to give a faithful account of the Contents of each piece, and of the Performances of each of our Controvertiſts, not only *not acquaint* the Reader with this my Defence, but *without any* Authority, nay *againſt* ſuch an uncon-teſtable Authority, ventures to throw about his *head-ſtrong* and wilful Forgeries; as that I *contradicted* my ſelf, *Eat my Words*, was *cited to Rome*; that what I write in my Letters is held there a *dangerous Hereſy*, that no Man of *Senſe* will *be hired to read three Pages in my Books*, *&c.* An evident ſign of a *Nonpluſt* Cauſe, which puts its Defenders to ſuch hard ſhifts to have recourſe to empty Vapours, huge Noiſes, and notorious Lies to uphold it.

9. You proceed and tell us next, that *my Letter has met with as few Readers as I have Admirers.* Here alſo there want ſome Grains of *Truth*, for I am inform'd there are not a Hundred left of my *Fifth Letter*; and ſending to buy ſome of my *Firſt*, I was told there was
P. 45. ſo few left that they are rais'd to double the price they were vended for in the beginning. Yet your *Comfort* is, *there is no danger in the World of my laſt Letter's doing*

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any miſchief, ſince you *do not believe it poſſible to hire any Man of Senſe to read three Pages in it.* Alas, poor Gentleman! I doubt not but you have a ſtrong Faith, which ſo blinds you that you cannot ſee how ridiculous you make your ſelf and your Friends. You gave us to underſtand by telling us Dr. *St. declines* the Task, that he *deſpairs* of *anſwering* that Letter *fairly* and upon the Square; and yet, when 'tis ſo clearly viſible that the *Regret* that you *cannot* anſwer it *vexes* and *galls* you to the Heart, you, like a right pleaſant Man, pretend to be much *Comforted*, that 'tis not *worth the anſwering*: A very cheap and eaſie Method to confute *all* the Books in the World. But, Sir, I am to tell you very *Diſcomfortable* News; which is, that the beſt Witts of our Nation, (to whom chiefly I write) Men not a jot inferiour to your Great Dr. himſelf, have not only read thoſe Letters of mine, but given ſuch a Character of them for *Unanſwerable*, as is not modeſt for me to repeat. And I have been told from a Perſon of worth, that the very Reverend *F. W.* after his peruſing ſome of my Letters, did honour them with his *Elogium*, that they *had laid Dr.* St. *ſo flat, that he would never be able to riſe again.* And, I am ſo confident of the goodneſs of my Cauſe, that I do here *promiſe* him and the World very faithfully that I ſhall make his Words good; or rather, by what follows here, it will appear I have done it already. For you tell us, that *a very Learned Perſon, in Compaſſion*, as you *ſuppoſe, to the poor headſtrong Man, hath undertaken to anſwer not only my Fifth Letter, but the other Diſcourſes of the Romaniſts about Tradition.* As much as to ſay, that Dr. has enough of me. I muſt confeſs, Sir, this would be very *Learned* indeed; for he muſt, in the main Paſſages, either *confute firſt Principles*, upon which I inſiſt, or elſe (which is equal- P. 41.

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ly impoſſible) ſhew that they do not ſtand engag'd againſt Dr. *St's* Diſcourſe. I know you can eaſily *nick-name* any thing an *Anſwer*, though never ſo trivial or wide from the purpoſe. But that we may hold to the Point which I foreſee you are flinching from, I will ſave your very *Learned Perſon* a great deal of trouble; and, if he can but *ſhew* us that any Chriſtian *now* living, has any Reaſon that *concludes* that the Faith he holds is the ſame which *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles taught, but by means of *Tradition*, I promiſe him I will be his Convert. This is the point in hand, and pray, Sir, let it be your care that your *very Learned Perſon*, do not *very Learnedly* run quite away from it into impertinent Digreſſions, as the *moſt Learned* Dr. *St.* did; for, if he does, I ſhall not be ſo *very Unlearned* as to follow his Ramble.

10. But it is not very pleaſant that you ſhould talk of *Compaſſion* to *me* who have left your Dr. in ſuch a *pitiful* and *miſerable* Condition, that he thinks it not creditable for him to proceed further with me *himſelf*? I ſuppoſe he *left me off*, as the Repreſenters Antagoniſt did him, or, as you Phraſe it (*p.* 12.) *Has thought fit, to give me up as a priviledg'd Perſon who is paſt hopes of being reclaim'd*; the true *Engliſh* of which of every prudent Reader will gueſs at. It would have done well tho' to have mingled a little *Charity* with his *Compaſſion*; for, certainly he had done a great Cure to have ſet me to rights: For I confeſs I am ſo *headſtrong* as ſtill to maintain that *Error Nonpluſt* has ſhewn clearly that the ſtupendiouſly Learned Dr. *St.* has never a Principle to help himſelf with: And the Dr. owes a cure to this ſtiff-neck'd humour of mine, ſince he has contributed to it by Modeſty declining now theſe Fifteen Years to anſwer that Book, or clear himſelf from being

* *Fifth Cath. Letter, p.* 153.

ing *A Man of No Principles.* I am ſo *headſtrong* too, that I will not let all the preſent Faith of Chriſtianity be held *poſſible to be Falſe*, or (which is the ſame, *not True.* Nay, I am ſo *headſtrong*, that when I ſee plainly that ſcarce *one* of my *Reaſons* are ſpoken to *candidly* and *fairly*, nor ſo much as one of them *anſwer'd*; I will not depart from my *Concluſion*, becauſe the incomparable Dr. *St.* prevaricates, flouts and falſifies. You ſee, Sir, of what Nature my Diſeaſe of *headſtrongneſs* is; and, if the *more-than-very Learned* Dr. *St.* cannot cure me himſelf, I much fear your *other* Perſon, who is no more but *very-Learned* will ſcarce do any good of me.

11. However, 'tis a Kindneſs that an Anſwer is *promis'd* me; but by *whom?* I peremptorily Challeng'd the Dr. *Himſelf* who is my proper Adverſary; and is he ſo ſhy to meet *me* and *vindicate himſelf*, when ſo many *heavy* Charges lie upon him, and particularly that *heavieſt* of making all Chriſtian Faith *poſſible to be Falſe*, or (which is the ſame) *not-True?* Can he have *any* buſineſs that *more nearly* concerns his Credit than *this* does? Or does he hope that *another* Perſon can know his *Thoughts* and *Reaſons*, and ſo, *defend* him, *better than Himſef can?* Neither of theſe can with any Senſe be thought or pretended. 'Tis manifeſt then that he is at his Wit's end how to reply pertinently; and therefore, ſeeing himſelf preſs'd cloſer and cloſer, and all his witty Evaſions diſcover'd, he very fairly quits the Field, and ſets on ſome *perdu* Bungler, furniſh'd with ſome Wit and a Plauſible Invective Style, but little or no Senſe; and who has as little Credit to loſe, as I ſhall get Honour by meddling with him; and this for no other end but that it may be *Trumpeted aloud* to the World in your next *Continuation*, how

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Incomparably J. S. has been *Answer'd.* Or, in case he be any Repute in the eye of the World, yet for fear of danger he shall keep himself invisible in his Misty Cloak, without owning *his Name*, but come out upon the Stage *Maskt*, as your ~~*Communicating*~~ continuating self does; and then (as your self also, secur'd after the same manner, has now done) he may without blushing, tell his Readers as many *Falshoods* as he pleases, and yet *save his Credit*; for then, like a Slander got among the Gossips, none knows *on whom to fix it.*

12. Well, but how will this *very Learned Person* answer me? Why, you tell us he will answer me in

An Historical Discourse concerning Tradition.

Iucomparable! I demand an Answer to *nine* or *ten Treatises*, and particularly to my *Several Reasons* alledg'd in them, of which, God be prais'd, there is good store; and this *very Learned Person* will undertake to *answer* them *All* in a *History.* Was it ever heard of since the World stood, that *Intrinsical Arguments* or *Reasons* are to be *answer'd* by *Histories*? Or, can these Men give the World a clearer Demonstration that they are perfectly baffled, than to trick off the *Direct Answers* they owe to my *Arguments* by such an *Indirect Wile*? Every Reader sees what a *Candid* and *Clear* Method I observe in all my Answers to the Dr. I take his Books and Reasons *end-ways* as they lie in order *Page* by *Page*; so that if I *run astray* from the Question in hand, or *omit* any thing of weight, 'tis easily *discoverable*, and I may be presently *caught*, for they know *where* to have me. On the other side my Adversaries can never be brought to follow any *such* fair Method: But they fall to write a Treatise about some Subject, which by the common words in the Title

tle looks a little a-kin to our Buſineſs; and then they catch at ſome Paſſages here and there incidentally ſcatter'd and diſorderly collected; and, the true Senſe and force of them, which they had as found in their due place, and the Tenour of the Diſcourſe being *loſt* or *perverted*, they fall to *play* upon thoſe words; but where the Anſwer is to *all the particular Reaſons* contain'd in my Book, we may go look. Something is ſlightly and wittily ſaid to a *few ſcraps* of it, but the *Main*, or the *Book itſelf*, is left unſpoken to. This untoward Method has been exactly follow'd by Dr. *Tillotſon* throughout his *Rule of Faith*, and in his *Preface to his Sermons*; and the ſame is moſt religiouſly obſerv'd by Dr. *St.* in his late pretended Anſwer to ſome of my Letters; and particularly in his *Examination* of the Council of *Trent*, where he runs quite away from the whole buſineſs, as is ſhewn, *Fifth Cath. Letter*, *p.* 152, 153.

13. But ſince this odd kind of Hiſtorian has undertaken to pay Dr. *St's* Debts, 'tis but fitting I ſhould give him a *Catalogue* of them.

Imprimis, He owes me an Anſwer to the many Arguments in *Faith Vindicated*, demonſtrating that the Rule by which we are to know what *Chriſt taught*, muſt be *Impoſſible to be Falſe*, or *Infallible*. This was apply'd in the *Inferences* at the end of that *Treatiſe* againſt the two Great Doctors; and it was ſhown there (I dare tell them) *Unanſwerably*, that unleſs they can confute *That* Book (which I am ſure they dare not fairly *Attempt*) all they *do* write or *can* write of Controverſy is at once quite overthrown. Since if it may be made good that Chriſtian Faith *muſt* have *ſuch* Concluſive Motives or *ſuch* a Rule to *eſtabliſh* it, and *recommend* it to thoſe who embrace it, and they have *none ſuch*, nay *diſclaim*

the having *any ſuch Rule*, they can never prove it *True* that any thing which themſelves, or any elſe, do now hold, is indeed Chriſt's Doctrine.

Item, He owes me an Anſwer to *Errour Nonpluſt*, which prov'd him *A Man of No-Principles*, and to the ſeveral Diſcourſes againſt each of thoſe pretended Principles of his reſpectively; for which I have leſs reaſon to forbear him any longer, becauſe he has in this long Term of Fifteen Years, (at leaſt,) *Endeavour'd* to clear ſome *other* Debts, but never went about to pay me *one ſingle Farthing*; which was very *Unconſcionable*.

Item, He owes me an Anſwer to my *Method*, Printed at the end of *Errour Nonpluſt*; which compriſes the ſumm of my Doctrine about Tradition, and reduces it to *Firſt Principles*; which therefore, ſince ſuch *Principles* will not be brought to *Contradict one another*, Dr. *St.* is the *moſt proper* Man in the World to *Oppoſe* and *Anſwer*, as having *No Principles at all*.

*See Fifth Cath. Letter p. 154. 155. 156. and p. 164. to p. 173.

Item, He owes me Anſwer to my *Firſt* and *Third Letters*; in regard he has omitted to ſpeak to * *Thirty Nine* parts of *Forty* in them; and his pretended Anſwer to the ſingle *Fortieth* part, has been ſhown in my Fifth Letter to be *none*.

Item, He owes me an Anſwer to my *Second Letter*; the Reflecter, being (poor Man!) *non-ſolvent*.

* *Ibid. p. 156. to p. 165.*

Item, He owes me a *Full Anſwer* to my *Fourth* Letter, laying open the *Vanity* of his inſignificant *Guild-Hall Sermon*; to which he *has* hitherto ſaid *Nothing*. I add, *nor ever can*, with the leaſt ſhow of Reaſon.

Item, He owes me a Compleat, Diſtinct and Direct Anſwer to my whole *Fifth Letter*, and all the *ſeveral* Diſcourſes in it; to which, if we muſt truſt you, he now declines to ſpeak.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, he owes me an Account why, in his *Appendix* to Dr. *T's Rule of Faith*, he undertook to confute *Tradition*, and yet wilfully *miſtook* the *Nature* of the Thing he was to *impugn*; as is ſhown *Fifth Cath.* Letter, p. 6. and 7. which renders that whole Appendix *Inſignificant*.

14. Now, Sir, ſince 'tis Impoſſible that all the Books concerning Tradition can with any ſenſe be ſaid to be *anſwer'd*, till the *Particular Reaſons* they inſiſt on be *diſtinctly* reply'd to; and 'tis ridiculous to expect this from a *Hiſtorical Diſcourſe*; I ſee we muſt ſet our hearts at reſt and expect no Anſwer at all, but only ſome ſleeveleſs Diſcourſe by a very large *Synecdoche*, or rather a far-ſtretcht *Catachreſis*, miſcall'd *an Anſwer*. However, I ſhall demand this Juſtice of you, that you would put down all theſe particular Treatiſes as *unanſwer'd* in an Appendix to this your *Continuation of the preſent State of* THE *Controverſie* (as you *ridiculouſly* call it, by the ſame figure as the French Parſon call'd the Devil *The Man of* THE *Sin.*) And do not brag that Dr. *T's Rule of Faith* is not yet reply'd to; for, beſides what has been done already, I am inform'd it will be *punctually* and *particularly Anſwer'd*: And, to requite your kindneſs, I hope by that time you write your next, to help you with ſome others to furniſh out your Narrative, and make you ſtand in need of ſome new Falſhoods and Invectives to ſave the Credit of your Friends, who are ſo laudably and meritoriouſly employ'd in maintaining that the faith of all Chriſtians in the World may be a *Lye*. If your *Hiſtorical Diſcourſer* fails of this performance, I ſhall not leave the Point or the Queſtion to dance after his impertinent Voluntaries. It will, in that caſe, be an abundant ſatisfaction to the World that I ſhow by detail what he has left unreply'd

to, and ſtill inſiſt upon a *full* and direct *Anſwer* to my ſeveral Reaſons and Diſcourſes. But pray tell him that *Scornful Jeers* and *Open Falſhoods*, though never ſo briskly, and *confidently* deliver'd, are no competent *Anſwers* to *Arguments*, and I have reaſon to fear he will bring *no other*, or rather I am ſure he *cannot*.

15. It were not amiſs, now my hand is in, and becauſe they are Partners, and eſpouſe the Cauſe of one another by their mutual kind Dedications, to caſt up at the ſame time, the Accounts between Dr. *Tillotſon* and my ſelf; that ſo, he that is in Arrears may do juſtice to the other, and pay his Debts, or at leaſt, as Bankrupts uſe to do, compound them.

16. Obſerving that Controverſy, (which rightly underſtood, is *the Science of ſettling Faith upon certain Grounds, for the ſatisfaction of Enquirers or Doubters, and for the Defence of its Truth against its Oppoſers*, who had deſerted the Church) was, through the looſe Methods of Reaſoning and quoting promiſcuouſly, generally made uſe of, become endleſs and inconcluſive; inſomuch that it came to lay a Scandal on Faith itſelf, as deſtitute of certain Principles, only which could aſſert its Truth, and was able to bring our Debates to a Concluſion. And that if this deciſive way was not taken, foreſeeing it would tend naturally to incline Men of Wit to turn Atheiſts or Deiſts: I did hereupon reſolve through God's Aſſiſtance, to bend my endeavour to ſettle Chriſtian Faith upon a ſolid *Baſis*, by demonſtrating the Abſolute Certainty of the *Rule* or Principle on which it was built, as far as concern'd its being the ſame which had been taught by our Divine Lawgiver, Chriſt, and by his holy Apoſtles; this being the only Conteſt among thoſe who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians. Hence I entitled my Book, *Sure foot-*

footing in Chriſtianity, that is, the firſt Ground, by relying on which, we may certainly know what Doctrines were truly *Chriſtian*. I took the exact way of *Science*, which is, to argue out of the *Nature* of the *Thing* or *Subject* in hand; that is, (our preſent Diſpute being about the *Rule* of Faith,) out of the Notion or Nature of a *Rule*, and the Nature of *Faith*: By an obvious Reflection on which I found that *Seven* Properties muſt neceſſarily belong to the *Rule of Faith*, viz. That it muſt be plain and ſelf-evident as to its exiſtence to *All*: And Evidenceable as to its *Ruling Power* to all ſorts of Enquirers; apt to juſtifie thoſe who did not doubt, for their adhering to the Faith which it recommended; alſo able to ſatisfie fully the moſt ſceptical Diſſenters and rational Doubters, and to convince the moſt obſtinate and acute Adverſaries: Alſo that it muſt be built on immoveable Grounds, or be certain in itſelf; and laſtly, abſolutely Aſcertainable to us; each of which I demonſtrated by plain Reaſon in my *Firſt Diſcourſe*.

17. In the three next Diſcourſes I demonſtrated that *none* of thoſe Properties, ſhown to be eſſential to the Rule of Faith, are competent to the *Letter* or Book of *Scripture*. However it be incomparably excellent in all other Regards, and for the many *Utilities* of it enumerated by St. *Paul*, and (Diſc. 5th.) that all thoſe Properties do clearly agree to TRADITION. And this was the Summ of that Book, and concluded the whole Diſpute, as is evident by the words at the beginning of that Diſcourſe, which were theſe: [For when it is once prov'd evidently that Tradition is a certain Rule of Faith, and Scripture's Letter not ſuch; they who reject the former, and adhere to the latter, are clearly caſt in their Cauſe, and condemn'd without more ado] which

which ſufficiently ſhow that all the reſt that follow it were *ex abundanti.*

18. The newneſs of this way of Controverſy, and the cloſeneſs of its Reaſons made a Great Miniſter of State to recommend warmly the anſwering it. Five choice Men were ſelected, who met on Mondays, (their moſt leiſurely day,) to conſider how to effect it. Dr. *Tillotſon* was choſen their Penman, a Perſon of much Wit and a clear Style: His Book was call'd *The Rule of Faith.* After many flouriſhing Skirmiſhes, now with Drollery, then with picking out words, and perverting them to render them invidious, by concealing the Reaſons there given, which made their Senſe more liable to be plaid upon, and other Dexterities, (at which he was as excellent as he was flat when he came to the true point) at length (Part 2d.) he came to the main buſineſs of the Properties of the Rule of Faith, and whether they belong to Tradition and not to Scripture's Letter. I aſſign'd *ſeven* Properties which were diſtinct from one another; he woulds needs reduce them into *Two, viz. ſufficiently plain, and intelligible,* and *ſufficiently certain to us.* By which he avoided anſwering all the Reaſons given for each; and, whereas my Arguments ſhow'd that this Rule muſt be *abſolutely certain,* he changes the main point in diſpute, by that indeterminate Dow-bak'd word (*Sufficiently*;) nor does he any where prove that the certainty he allows his Rule is *ſufficient* to make intelligent Men *aſſent* to their Faith; or *profeſs* it, though with the hazard of loſing that is dear to them in this World, nay with laying down their Lives to *atteſt* its *Truth*; or any duty of that Nature, which is requir'd of us as Chriſtians; but ſhuffles it off with the ſlight word (*Sufficient.*) And *p.* 118. when he comes to tell us how firm and certain his

his Rule is, he tells all Chriſtians for their comfort, that [*we are not infallibly certain that any Book is ſo Antient as it pretends to be; or that it was written by him whoſe Name it bears; or that this is the Senſe of ſuch and ſuch paſſages in it; it is poſſible all this may be otherwiſe*] Now, we are to ſuppoſe that by the word [*we*] he means *Chriſtians*, and that thoſe Chriſtians hold their Faith *True*, and conſequently when he ſays [*It is poſſible all this may be otherwiſe* than they hold it to be, he muſt mean [*poſſible to be not True but Falſe;*] and is not this a wonderful *ſufficient* Certainty of his Rule, which leaves it in every regard *poſſible to be falſe*: Or could he have poſſibly have better *confuted* his Letter-Rule which he pretends here to *defend*, than to contend that both its Grounds, and all the Faith which is built on them, may be ſo many Lies? Again, whereas he ſays, he and all his Chriſtians *are not infallibly certain* of the very Exiſtence, Authority, or Senſe of their *Rule*, I ask whether they be *certain* of them *at all*; if they be Certain of them *at all* and *not infallibly* Certain, then common Senſe tells every Man they can only be *fallibly Certain* of them; but *fallible Certainty* is a ridiculous piece of *Nonſenſe*, nor was it ever heard ſince the Creation, that any Man ſpeaking his Natural thoughts, did ever ſay, *I am fallibly Certain* of ſuch a thing. So the upſhot of his ſpruce ſo much applauded Book is this, that he confeſſes openly he builds his Rule of Faith, and, conſequently, all the Chriſtian Faith in the World, upon a ruinous piece of *flat dull Nonſenſe*.

19. Can any thing imaginable be more ridiculous than when he is *defending* his Rule, thus to *overthrow* it? Nothing certainly, unleſs it be this that follows, nor can there be found a match for this Author in ſuch per-

performances, but himſelf. His Sixth Section, p. 146. bears for its Title; *That the Properties of a Rule of Faith do not belong to Oral Tradition*: Yet p. 149, which is immediatly after, he expreſly *grants* it has all the Properties of a Rule of Faith, even as himſelf aſſigns them, and therefore *is* ſuch a Rule. For he confirms it is *plain and intelligible*; and, as *for the ſecond Property*, he acknowledges that *all I pretend to in this Diſcourſe* (that is in *all* the Book hitherto, where I was ſettling the Rule of Faith, and which he has been all this while confuting) *is, that if this Rule has been followed and kept to all along, the Chriſtian Doctrine neither hath, nor can have received any Change*; to which a little after he ſubjoyns *All this is readily granted him.* Now ſince, as he confeſſes this is *all I pretended hitherto*, is it not prodigious, and convicts his Book hitherto of mere fooling, to *grant* at *laſt* what he has been ſo long *confuting*? Again, it is not pleaſant to profeſs he grants that *readily* which he has ſpent 148 Pages in oppoſing? And moſt ſenſleſs to put for his Title, *that the Properties of a Rule do not belong to Tradition*; and yet in the ſame Section, to confeſs that they *do belong* to it. For ſure he does not think that Men's *following* it is any Property of the *Rule* itſelf, which has all that is due to its nature, if it be apt to regulate or guide them right, who think fit to *uſe* it. Laſtly, leſt this Conceſſion ſhould hap to be taken notice of, he skips thence immediatly, with a nimble Tranſition, to avoid the ſpeaking a word to my ſixth Diſcourſe, which ſhow'd that all that follow'd was *ex abundanti* and *needleſs*; and that his late forced Conceſſion was the yielding up his whole Cauſe. In the mean time let him ſhow us (which he never *did*, nor *can*) that Scriptures Letter is ſo *plain* and *intelligible* in Spiritual Points, and the

the Higheſt Myſteries of our Faith, to *all*, and ſo *Certain* a Conveyer down of Chriſt's Doctrin, that it muſt come to us *without any Alteration*; and he will do more than an ordinary Miracle, by confuting and baffling the conſtant Experience of all Ages ſince the Apoſtles times, which aſſures us, that whole Bodies of Men have rely'd on Scripture, and quoted it for their Heretical Tenets, and yet have contradicted one another, and oppos'd the known Doctrine of the whole Catholick Church; tho' there can need no more evident Proof of the *inſufficiency* of this Rule, then that the *Socinians*, who are great Scripturiſts and Learned Men, do rely ſolely on that Rule, hold to it conſtantly, and ſtill maintain the Liſts againſt all Oppoſers, and yet deny the Trinity and Chriſt's Divinity.

20. This Glorious Book came out in the Year *1666*, at which time I was reduced to a Skeleton by a long Sickneſs; ſo that, not reſting in the Night, I had no Spirit or Strength to anſwer it; but two or three hours after I had repos'd in the Afternoon, and in thoſe only when my Doctor would give me leave. Yet, I reſolv'd as far as my weak Condition ſhould enable me, not to let the Cauſe of Truth ſink by my Silence. A Friend procur'd me a Copy of that Book in Sheets, aſſoon as it was printed. So I made my Remarks upon it end-ways curſorily; and when I had writ one Sheet, having a Printer near me, I ſent it to the Preſs, and ſtill writ enough for another Sheet, while the former was Printing; ſo that within the compaſs of a Month or Five Weeks, the whole was compleated: Dr. *St.* was pleas'd to ſay in his Dedication to his *Appendix*, (for they dedicated to one another) that he *hop'd I would* ſend Dr. *T.* a *Letter of Thanks* for the Reaſon and Kindneſs he had *ſhewn* me throughout his Book:

Whence, not to defeat his *hopes*, I gave that Title to my Reply, *thanking* him for all the Advantages he had given me againſt himſelf. In that Treatiſe I laid open his Ignorance what a *Principle* meant, his ridiculous vain and childiſh drollery, built only his voluntary perverting my Words and Senſe; his conſtant Falſifications and Prevarications, almoſt quite through his Book; of which I gave, (omitting many others,) Forty Inſtances at leaſt, all of them Evident to Eye-ſight; alſo with how many wiles he had omitted the ſpeaking to my Reaſons, or letting the Reader know of them; and laſtly, I ſhow his pretended Teſtimonies to be utterly inſignificant.

21. They ſuſpended the Publiſhing their Book about Three Weeks, till they had got a great number of them Bound to preſent to His Majeſty, the Biſhops, and to other great Men; in the mean time, my Reply went on Printing; ſo that, within a Fortnight or Three Weeks after they had permitted it to be ſpread univerſally to be ſold, my Anſwer appear'd moſt unexpectedly; which, was ſuch a choak-pear to them, that a reſolution was taken to give me another kind of Anſwer than was uſual among Scholars; eſpecially, that they might prevent the coming out of a fuller Anſwer which I had intended, and had in ſome ſort promis'd. Mr. *Martin* a Bookſeller, at the *Bell*, in St. *Paul's Church-yard*, an honeſt Man, and my Friend, ſent me word to look to my ſafety, for Dr. *T.* had threaten'd me highly, and he verily believ'd, would ſeek my ruin. My Sickneſs ſecur'd me from appearing, which was of long continuance. The Fire of *London* happen'd the *September* following; at which time, a Bookſeller's Man of his Acquaintance, by Name *Oldham*, made Oath before a Juſtice, that he ſaw me throw Fire-balls

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while *London* was Burning, to continue and propagate the Fire; and my worthy Friend Dr. *Godden*, ſent me word that my Lord Keeper being acquainted with Biſhop *Ruſſel*, ſent for him, and told him, that I muſt either appear and ſhow where I was at that very time, or they muſt be forced to iſſue out a Proclamation to take me; the People being then in ſuch a ferment, that there was no other way to pacify them, when it came to be known publickly. Now, had I at that time been in perfect health, Charity would have inclin'd me to lend my beſt Advice and Aſſiſtance to ſave ſome Houſes from that Calamity; but, it pleas'd God I was ſick in Bed all the time, ſo that I was not able to ſtand alone, but was upheld by two Nurſes when they ſet me a Chair till my Bed was made more eaſie. A ſtrange Providence! For, I had otherwiſe been taken, and, in that juncture certainly hang'd for an Incendiary; which had been a ſpeeding Confutation of all I had written, and deciſive of the whole Controverſie. I ſent to Biſhop *Ruſſel*, to intreat my Lord Keeper, that the Fellow that accus'd me might be brought before him at a preciſe time, and I would appear (for I had gather'd more ſtrength immediatly after) with Eight Witneſſes, beſides Dr. *Argall*, my Phyſician, to atteſt the Falſhood and Impoſſibility of his ſlanderous Perjury: It ſeems that Lord had acquainted ſome of my Enemies with the matter; for it was immediatly huſh't with the greateſt care imaginable; after they ſaw it would not take, and my Accuſer either run away, or was kept out of the way, for he was not ſeen or heard of till a Year and half after. Thus, bleſſed be God, *Anima noſtra erepta eſt de laqueo venantium*. A ſecond Plot was hatching to take me in my private Lodging in *Carter lane*, the very next day after

the time the Proclamation, to baniſh Catholicks out of *London*, had allow'd. But very providentially, an honeſt Proteſtant who hated ſuch baſeneſs, told it to Mr. *Langhorn*, who acquainted Dr. *Waring* with it: He ſent me word of my danger by his Servant the next Morning before it was day, which made me, ſeeing the Malice of the two Brethren in Iniquity (whom my Informer nam'd as the Contrivers and intended Proſecutors) I went preſently into *Holland* for ſome time, hoping their Anger would be ſomething abated by my abſence.

22. After four Months my occaſions preſſing, I return'd, but kept private among my Friends. I had intended to give a large Anſwer to his whole Book; which would have ſhown it to be the moſt Diſingenuous and Weak Piece that ever ſaw light: I purpos'd to reduce it, throughout every Section, into *Principles*, I mean ſuch as lay at the bottom of all his Diſcourſes, and were the Groundwork of all his aiery and fantaſtick Deſcants; which would have diſcover'd it to be wholly made up of Tricks, Drollery, Falſifications and Nonſenſe. A Method which I would recommend to future Writers for Faith, when they have to do with an Adverſary who thinks to beat down Truth by ſuch aukward and inſignificant Talk; leſt weak Readers ſhould miſtake plauſible Rhetorick boldly deliver'd, and clad in neat Language, for ſolid Truth; which kind of bantering will be quite ſham'd out of countenance and be utterly diſgrac'd, by ſhowing it to be perfectly *Groundleſs*; this being the propereſt and greateſt Advantage Truth can have over Error. But ere I had begun, I was inform'd that there was an attempt made to put the Laws in Execution, in their utmoſt ſeverity, againſt a virtuous and worthy Family near *Hartford*,

ford, where I us'd to retire. This amaz'd them and all that heard of it: Their Converſation being ſo inoffenſive and free from indiſcreet Zeal, and the Love and Eſteem they had from all their Proteſtant Neighbors being ſo great, that it was very ſurprizing why they alone, when no other Catholicks in *England* lay under any reſentments, ſhould *then* be thus expos'd to the laſh of the Laws, which by the mercy of our Governours ſeem'd, by a long deſuetude to be now antiquated; till a worthy Knight, their Neighbour and kind Friend, aſſur'd them it was for harbouring and welcoming *J. S.* in their Houſe. Hereupon I ſent them word I would never viſit them more, and deſir'd them to let the Knight know as much; which put an end to the Proſecution.

23. Finding Malice ſtill ſo vigorous, and fearing all my Friends would ſuffer for my ſake, I did, by the advice of beſt and wiſeſt Friends, deſiſt from giving that large Anſwer; which would have left my Two Adverſaries nothing but Nonſenſe and Froth to brag of, and conſequently exaſperated them even to Madneſs. Yet, reſolving not to let Truth loſe her Victory and *Prevalency*, and having engag'd my word, that *God giving Life and Health, I would never leave following on my blow, till I either brought them to lay Principles; or it came to be evident to all the world that they had none*; I caſt about for an expedient how to compaſs both thoſe Ends; *viz.* not to exaſperate too much, and yet to perform my Duty to the full. I ſaw that to lay open the perpetual defects of an Author had ſo much of Perſonal in it, that it would be exceedingly grating; and I had ſome reaſon to think from ſome Paſſages in their Books, that it would leſs diſpleaſe them to ſhow the Grounds of their *Faith* to be *Fallible*, than to manifeſt them-

themſelves to be *Faulty*. It occur'd to me alſo that I had miſplac'd my endeavours in beginning firſt with *Sure-footing*, which treated of the *Quid eſt*, or *What* was the Rule of Faith; whereas I ſaw now I ſhould have begun with proving firſt that Faith has *any* Rule at all; ſince that cannot in good ſenſe be call'd a Rule, to any thing which, tho' they direct themſelves by it, permits them to go wrong: For, it being the genuin ſentiment of all who profeſs Chriſt, that Chriſtian Faith cannot be a *Lye*; I did not reflect that I ſhould have to do with Men who, by making the Rule, which only can aſcertain it, *Truth*, *Fallible*, (or *fallibly Certain*) do, by a neceſſary conſequence maintain it *may all be Falſe*. Wherefore, hoping to have all ſincere honeſt Chriſtians on my ſide, my firſt Expedient was to demonſtrate that the *Rule* of Chriſtian Faith, and, conſequently, that *Faith* itſelf, was *abſolutely* or *infallibly Certain*; and entituled my Book FAITH VINDICATED *from poſſibility of Falſhood*. In it I brought at leaſt Forty Demonſtrations ſuitable to all capacities, eſpecially thoſe of Learned Men, fetcht from Logick, Ethicks, Natural Philoſophy, Metaphyſicks, Divinity, the Language and Practice of Chriſtianity, and the Genuin Sentiment of Chriſtians, that Faith, and conſequently, (ſince nothing can be more firm than the Ground it ſtands on) the *Ground* or *Rule of Faith*, muſt be *abſolutely or infallibly Certain*; and gave Anſwers to all the Objections that could ſeem of any Weight or Pertinent: And when I had done, I apply'd it, at the end againſt Dr. *T.* and his Friend; and concluded thence evidently, that ſince he not meerly *confeſſes* but *maintains* that there is no Rule of Chriſtian Faith, that is truly *Certain*, or (which I there ſhow'd to be the ſame:) *Infallible*, but that the very *Exiſtence* and *Re-*

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ſtitude of the Letter of Scripture, it's *Author* (on which depends its *Authority*,) and its *Senſe* (which is the very *Faith* Chriſtians profeſs) *may poſſibly, all* of them, *be otherwiſe* than we hold them, that is *otherwiſe than True*, or *Falſe*; his whole Book was utterly overthrown; that therefore it was *Nick-nam'd* the *RULE of Faith*, and ought rather be entituled [*No poſſibility of any RULE of Faith*,] ſince 'tis againſt common ſenſe to call that a *RULE*, which Men do their beſt to follow, and yet go wrong or *err*; as do the *Socinians*, and all other Hereticks who have deſerted the Catholick Church, and her Doctrin. This was, I preſume, a *following on my blow* with a witneſs, and a thorow-confutation of that whole Book; it being a needleſs and ſleeveleſs task to ſtand lopping off the *Branches* when it was thus ſtubb'd up by the *Root*.

24. Again, it being impoſſible Error ſhould have any Principles, and the Privilege of Truth only to have ſuch Grounds; it *follows* that there can be no more efficacious way to do right to Truth, than to *ſettle* her on her own immovable *Baſis*, *Firm Grounds*, and then to challenge his Adverſaries to do the ſame, and to *Eſtabliſh* their Erroneous Tenets upon *Principles*. Nothing is eaſier than to pretend to *anſwer*; for, as St. *Auſtin* ſays, *Facile eſt cuiquam videri reſpondiſſe, ſi tacere noluerit*. *'Tis eaſie for any Man to make a ſhow of Anſwering, if he be reſolv'd to talk on ſtill*, tho' it be to no purpoſe; but when they come to *ſettle*, or lay *Grounds*, the very Attempt will evidently diſcover their faltering and the impotency of their Cauſe. Hereupon, the ſecond Experiment I reſolv'd to make uſe of was to eſtabliſh the Rule of Faith upon *undeniable Grounds*, and reduce them to *cleareſt Evidence*, which only True Principles could give it; and then to challenge

lenge them civilly to do the ſame. Hereupon I writ and publiſh't my METHOD *to arrive at ſatisfaction in Religion*; which was a connected cloſe Diſcourſe and perfectly Demonſtrative; which, afterwards, to ſhow it to be ſuch, I reduc'd ſo *Self-evident* or *Identical* Propoſitions. What ſaid the Doctors to thoſe numerous Demonſtrations, (the leaſt of which quite overthrew his Cauſe,) or to my Reaſons in my *Method*! Not a word; yet ſomething muſt be done for meer Shame. Wherefore, being reſolv'd to print his *Sermons*, and dedicate them to his kind Auditory, who, he well knew, would be eaſily appay'd with any thing, he very politickly beſtow'd two or three ſhort ſtrictures upon them; but for anſwering ſo much as *one* Reaſon in either of them, we muſt excuſe him.

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25. I would not let him ~~envy~~ the Honour of this attempt, however empty and inſignificant; but confuted it at large; entituling my Book *REASON againſt RAILLERY*: In which I manifeſted, (to p. 6.) his prodigious Ignorance of *Firſt Principles*; letting him know of what Nature they were, and what uſe is to be made of them. I laid open his ridiculous Drollery and empty Vapours, in perverting the ſolideſt Diſcourſes there to a fooliſh ſenſe, and then laughing at them moſt exquiſitely; which method he purſues conſtantly both in his miſcall'd *Rule of Faith*, and in his *Preface*. I ſhow'd (p. 45.) how far he was from a ſubſtantial Scholar in denying Abſolute Certainty in all Sciences but the Mathematicks. I let him ſee (p. 57.) that Moral Actions, tho' Free, might be capable of Certainty in ſome caſes, *viz.* when the Nature of *Man*, or of a *Will* are engag'd; which he ſo learnedly miſunderſtood in his former Book; as alſo what kind of Teſtimony that muſt be which can have

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Title to our *Assent* as to Matters of Fact, and that a Testimony which is *hic & nunc Fallible*, or which *may be deceived* in that particular, cannot make us with Reason judge that what it attests is a *certain Truth*. In the 5th Discourse (*p.* 71.) I proceed to examine his *Sermon* to prove a Deity, his *Firm Principle*, (as he called it) or rather his First Principle, and shew'd, 1st, that he made it a *Conclusion*: Next, that the *Terms* of it were *incoherent*, and, therefore it was *False*. Thirdly, that it was altogether *impertinent* to his purpose. I dilated how incompetent his Certainty, *viz.* such as only *excluded Actual Doubt*, was to ground our *Assent* of Christian Faith, especially the Tenet of a *Deity*. In regard it made Turks, Jews, and even Atheists *as sure* of what they hold, or not hold, as Christians are of their *Faith*, or that there is a GOD. Hence I charg'd him, *p.* 90. that he betray'd all Religion into the Possibility of being a *Lye*, even while he pretended to establish it, by his asserting that we cannot be certain of a Deity, unless we entertain his *First Principle*; which is so full stuff'd with Nonsense and Folly, that, unless it be in *Bedlam*, 'tis like to be entertained no where. To justifie my Charge, I cite (*p.* 95.) the words of his *Sermon*, all along, in which he pretends to prove a *Creation*, or a *First Being*; where he over and over vouches his Arguments to evince that point to be only *Likelyhoods*; *more credible* than the contrary *Probabilities*, *Probable Reasons*, and such like, (in which we experience our selves to be often mistaken, or in an Error) but not *one* Proof does he bring that he vouches to be *Certain* or *Conclusive*; nor a word has he there that is much as *says* they are *Certain Truth*. Now to set himself to prove there is a *GOD*, and yet bring no Arguments to prove it, but such as

by the Character himself gives of them, leaves it *possible* there is *no God*, and *uncertain* there is *any*, is (especially from the Mouth of a Christian, and one who has the Repute of a Learned Man) such a deadly Blow to all Religion (which depends upon the Certainty and Truth of that most Fundamental Tenet) that it lies not in the power of all the Atheists in the World to do it such a Disparagement. No wonder then that he contended in his Book that *Faith*, and all its *Grounds*, might *possibly be false*, who allow'd in his Sermon-Proofs that the Tenet of the Existence of the Author, and adorable Object of *all* Religion, was no more than *likely* or *probable*; that is, in other terms, *perhaps not True*.

26. My Sixth Discourse shew'd how he muster'd up all the kinds of Uncertainties he could invent, to avoid the *Absolute Certainty* of Christian Faith and its Grounds; such as were fair *Probabilities*, *Likelyhoods*, *Prudential Motives*, *Moral Certainty*, *not Doubting actually*, and such like; none of which gain'd *Faith*, or the *Letter* and *Sense* of Scripture above the *Possibility of being false*; nor consequently, could justifie any intelligent Man for *professing* or *dying* to testifie its *Truth*; nor were able to prove, against its Adversaries, that any point of Faith was *certainly true*: He was beat shamefully from all his Subterfuges and Pretences, with which he laboured hard to prove that there could be no certain Grounds, or any Rule of Faith in which all Mankind might not be *Deceived*; and, consequently that all Christian Faith might be a Lying Fiction, for any thing any Man living knows. His *Fallible Certainty* was expos'd and shown to be most pernicious Nonsense; and it was demonstrated against him over and over most evidently, that the Notions of *Certainty* and *Infallibility* was all one, and that no Man could with Truth say,

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he was *certain* of a thing, and acknowledge, at the same time, he *saw* he might be *deceived* in it.

27. It was clearly manifested there (Discourse 7th.) that instead of answering any one of those numerous Demonstrations in FAITH VINDICATED, he pretends himself to be gravell'd with five Words, *Potentiality*, *Actuality*, *Actuation*, *Determination*, *Superiors*, and *Subsume*, which he likens to the *Coptick* and *Sclavonian Language*, and to *Astrology*, *Palmestry*, *Chymistry*, &c. As if all Arts and Sciences had not terms of Art proper to themselves in not allowing which the elegant Gentleman does too liberally acknowledge; he minds *fine Words* more than *good Sense*, and complains of the *Tenderness of his Ears*, when the true reason is the *Softness of his Head*. But 'tis already understood by a Hundred Instances, that (poor baffled Hector) he is ever most *merry*, when he ought to be most *serious*, and that when he is gravell'd with Arguments, he has recourse to Buffoonery; though in this occasion he sinks below his other Performances; for he did formerly now and then *joke wittily*, but here his best play was to *talk Childishly*.

28. My METHOD fares no better; I deduced that Discourse step by step, from the very *Nature* or *Essence* of the Subject in dispute, *viz.* from the Notion of the *Rule* of *Faith*, and made the forgoing Proposition still draw after it, by undeniable consequence the following one. But this was unsuitable to his Genius, which affects the Liberty of *Rambling* Rhetorically, but hates to bring, or speak to, any Discourse that is *connected himself*, and dreads to *answer*, it when brought by *others*. Yet Two things he does, and both of them strange ones. First, he affirms that that Discourse *is founded on the self evident Infallibility of Oral Tradition*.

Which makes me *suppose* that which I am there *proving*, and to put that for my *Principle*, which is evidently my *Conclusion*. I mean all but the word [*Self-evident*] which he adds out of his profuse Liberality. Next, that he has *sufficiently consider'd* that point in his *Rule of Faith*; where (as he tells us there) he *readily granted it*.

I beg of the Reader to peruse from *p.* 189. to *p.* 208. in *Reason against Railing*, and he will see what an *Idea* or *Phœnix* the Dr. is in his kind, who puts off *Answering*, by telling us he had *sufficiently consider'd* what he confesses he had *granted*.

29. In a word, I answer'd distinctly and very largely to every tittle in his Preface, and withal, to diverse Passages in his *Rule of Faith*, where he gave me any occasion to clear any Point, that seem'd to aim at the least *Solidity*, which were very few; and show'd to the Readers Eye, that the whole Complexion of his way of answering Arguments, was no more but to pick a word or two out of a connected Discourse, pervert it to a ridiculous Sense, and then turn it over to be abus'd by his Learned Talents of Irony and Drollery. As if he made account his Readers were to be a company of meer *Gigglers*, and had only the Faculty of *Risibility* in them, but were quite destitute of *Rationality*.

30. But 'tis now high time I should make up Accounts with him, and put him in mind of his Debts.

Imprimis, Then, he stands indebted to me for a Reply to my Letter of Thanks as to the *Rational* part of it, that concern'd our Subject.

Item, He owes me Satisfaction for all the Jeers, Ironies, Prevarications, and open Falsifications, which, (as I there manifested, he had afforded us in his *Rule of Faith*,

Faith, inſtead of pertinent Anſwers to my Arguments. Particularly, for that egregious and bold Falſification, which runs thorow the Reply to the ſecond half of *Sure-footing*, where he inſerted (contrary to my expreſs words frequently repeated) the large-lens'd Word [ALL] which he puts in a diſtinct Letter to make it more remarkable, and builds his whole Impugnation upon that very Word, which he had ſo diſingenuouſly added.

Item, He owes an Anſwer to thoſe numerous Demonſtrations in *Faith Vindicated*, which ſhow'd that Chriſtian Faith muſt have ſuch a Rule as is *abſolutely certain*. Alſo he owes me an account why he entituled his Book that deny'd it has any ſuch Rule, [*The Rule of Faith*] and not rather [*No Rule of Faith*] it being the greateſt Nonſenſe to call that an *Intellectual Rule*, which, tho' followed to our Power, does not ſecure us from being led into Errors.

Item, He owes an Anſwer to my METHOD, the cloſe and connected Tenour of which he has left yet wholly unanſwer'd.

Item, He owes me an Anſwer to my whole large Book, *Reaſon againſt Raillery*, to which he has never ſo much as pretended to *offer* one word of Anſwer.

Item, The main of his *Rule of Faith*, being abundantly reply'd to in theſe four Treatiſes of mine now mention'd, and manifeſted by Multitudes of Inſtances, that inſtead of ſpeaking to my Reaſons, he only picks out a Word or two, turns them to a fooliſh Senſe, and falls to Drollery; he owes me ſtill a *pertinent* Anſwer to *Sure footing*, and to all the ſolid Arguments which I had there produced; and this, as they lay in *my Book*, and as expreſs'd in *my Words*, and not as molded

ded anew in his own untoward Method, or changing *Abſolute* Certainty into *Sufficient*.

Item, If it be not too unmerciful to preſs poor Debtors who are Bankrupt already, I would on this occaſion, mind him of the greateſt Debt he owes to the Chriſtian World, and to the Adorable Author of our Faith, in not only leaving all the Doctrine of Chriſt now profeſs'd in the whole World, in a Poſſibility of being *Falſe*, and this in a Circumſtance in which he was to maintain it to be *certainly True*, but alſo for openly profeſſing he has never an Argument to evince the Exiſtence of a *Deity*, or of a *Creation*, (which he undertook to prove in his neat weak *Sermon*) but what's only *probable* and *likely*; which leaves it *uncertain* whether there is a GOD or no. By which quivering Diſcourſes, advanc'd by two Chriſtian Writers of the higheſt Fame and Repute, and pickt out for the moſt choice and moſt expert Champions to defend Faith, which (as has been made evident beyond Conteſt) are not only deſtitute of *ſolid Principles*, but profeſſedly maintain there are *none*, that can evince the *Truth* and *Certainty* of it; it cannot be doubted but Atheiſm and Deiſm, which now ſo abound in *England*, have in great part naturally iſſu'd. All they have to uphold their Credit with thoſe of an indifferent Pitch, which compound the generality; *his* flouriſhes of Wit, and elegant Language, Remarks and Sentences out of ancient Authors, and the many dexterous Artifices of perverting the curtail'd Arguments and Senſe of their Adverſary, and then playing upon them wittily; but as for producing or laying *any one Principle* to ſettle the *Truth* of Chriſtian Faith upon a firm and immoveable Baſis, we muſt excuſe them. I can liken them to nothing ſo well, as to *Darius* and his Perſians, who when

when they were to fight against *Alexander*, came into the Field attir'd with their glittering Dreſs of gawdy Cloaths, and rich Ornaments, which made a glorious ſhow, but were inſignificant in War; but as They, for a juſt Reward of their weak Vanity were ſoundly beaten; ſo muſt thoſe Writers receive a perfect Baffle, when they come into the Liſts of Controverſy, arm'd with the ſhining Embelliſhments of Eloquence and Wit to combat Truth, whoſe ſtrength conſiſts only in her Grounds and Principles; which being laid and *fix'd* in their Nature by the GOD of *Truth*, are altogether invincible. But (as St. *Auſtin* ſays) *In malâ causâ non poſſunt aliter — ſed quis coegit eos malam cauſam habere!* But it is now high time to return to Dr. *Stillingfleet* and the *Continuator*; and, if poſſible, contrive ſome way how he (and his Friend Dr. *Tillotſon*) may pay their Debts.

31. I would gladly find ſome expedient to excuſe them from the vaſt labour of picking out their ill wrought Stitches, and, beginning on a new Score and a better Method to give an Anſwer, upon the ſquare, to ſo many Books. Wherefore, ſince 'tis Unmerciful to preſs *poor Debtors* to pay more than they are *able*, therefore *out of Compaſſion to your head-ſtrong Party*, I will come to this fair Compoſition with them; that if Dr. *St.* can anſwer me but *one ſingle* Argument which I will bring to prove, that he *cannot*, by his Principles, maintain it to be true, that what you or *any* now hold is *Chriſt's Doctrine*, nor conſequently that the preſent Chriſtian Faith itſelf is *True*: Alſo, if he can bring but *one* Argument himſelf, which (according to his Principles) does *conclude* that what *he* or any *other* Chriſtian now holds *is* Chriſt's Doctrine, and, ſo, *True*: I will pardon the *Vaſt Sums* he owes me, and quit all

ſcores.

ſcores between us; nay more, I will acknowledge all the guilded Bubbles in your trothy Books to be ſolid Senſe, and make you publick Satisfaction for having oppos'd you hitherto. I hope the Reader will think there was never in the World a *kinder Creditor*, conſidering the *long* ſcroll of what he is indebted to me for, and *how long* much of it has been due. Your Argument I am to expect. Mine is ready; premiſing firſt this Lemma, that

[*What's True is* (in our caſe) *Impoſſible to be False.*] For, we are not ſpeaking here of *future Contingents*, or of ſuch caſes where the Changeableneſs of the matter may *vary* the Truth of the Propoſition as affirm'd at *Preſent*, but of what *has* determinately *paſt* or *not paſt*; whence what truly *has been Taught* by Chriſt is impoſſible now *not to have been Taught by him.* This evident Truth fore-laid, I argue thus.

No Proof from Reaſon that *does not Evidently conclude*, nor Teſtimony that is *Fallible*, can prove a thing *Impoſſible to be falſe.*

Therefore no ſuch Proof or Teſtimony can prove a thing to be *True.* Lemma.

But Dr. *St.* allows no *Concluſive Evidence* previous to Faith, that *Chriſt* taught ſuch or ſuch a Doctrine, nor any Teſtimony but what's *Fallible.*

Therefore Dr. *St.* cannot prove it *True*, that the Faith which *he* or any other Chriſtian holds is *Chriſt's Doctrine*; nor conſequently, that Chriſtian Faith itſelf is *True.*

§6. The Concluſiveneſs of this Argument I undertake to make good, let him attack it where he will. Here is no Sham, Jeer, Ill Language, nor any of your or his little Tricks, but plain *downright Reaſon.* And, ſince I am forc'd by your Indirect Carriage to *Rigorous*

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe, I expect from him the Rigorous Duty of a Reſpondent; *viz.* to *Deny*, *Grant* or *Diſtinguiſh* the ſeveral Propoſitions, and he ſhall have the ſame Return from me. I ſhall expect at the ſame time when he ſpeaks to this Diſcourſe, *his* Argument, *concluding* (by his Principles) that what *himſelf* or *any other* Chriſtian now holds, is indeed Chriſt's Doctrine; and, ſo, *True*. And, if he refuſes to afford me that moderate Satisfaction, he rejects my kind offer of ſuch a fair Compoſition: And ſo he will ſtand yet engag'd to give me pertinent and diſtinct Anſwers to all thoſe Treatiſes, and the ſeveral Arguments contain'd in them which ſtrike at his Tenets: And if he thinks it his Intereſt to join iſſue with me in ſuch cloſe and rigorous Diſcourſe, I do here promiſe him there ſhall not be one word of *Raillery* (to which I am unwillingly drawn by his and his Friends Carriage) nor the leaſt kind of *Excurſion*; but *Pertinent* and *Plain* Arguing, according to the Rules of exact Logick; and the ſame I ſhall expect from *him*. In order to which I make him this *Fair Offer*, that, which of us ſoever *deflects* into any *irregular* Method, other than direct *Arguing* or *Anſwering*, ſhall be held to be *Nonpluſt*, and to have *Loſt his Credit*. Every honeſt Man will ſee that this Propoſal is both *Fair* in itſelf, and *Equal* to both ſides; and argues a ſincere Intention in the Propoſer that *Truth may appear*. And therefore, if he *diſ-accepts* this *Offer* or *declines* this *Method*, it will become manifeſt that he is *utterly Loſt*, as he is a Mantainer of the Cauſe depending between us.

33. By the way I deſire to know from the Dr. why this *one* Argument of mine has not given a *Full Anſwer* to both his Books againſt the *Council of Trent*, nay, to all he *hath* written or *ſhall* write, in the Judgment of every intelligent Man. Or *why* thoſe Diſcourſes which

the Author himſelf is forbidden by his own Principles, to affirm that they contain a word of *Truth* in them, can deſerve any Anſwer at all. Indeed, if he will renounce his ſhallow Principles, and beginning on a new ſcore, undertake to ſhew, that ſuch or ſuch a *Reaſon* is *Concluſive*, or ſuch a *Teſtimony* is *Infallible*; He might, in that *caſe*, pretend to *prove* that to be *True* which is built upon them, and ſo deſerve an Anſwer; otherwiſe what Man, that is not over-courteous, will take himſelf to be oblig'd to reply to Great Books, in which, by the Authors own Confeſſion, no Man living knows whether there be ſo much as *one word* of Truth in them? Whence follows evidently that Dr. *St.* ought in true Reaſon either to take up better Principles, or to leave off writing Controverſy; nay, even to leave off defending his own former Books. For 'tis a ſtrange and deſperate piece of Magnanimity for a Writer to maintain that to be a *Truth* which his own Principles force him to confeſs he knows not but it *may be Falſe*; that is, *he knows not* whether it be *True* or no?

34. If you or your Friends continue reſolute to purſue this impertinent Topick that my Doctrine about Tradition is held by the Governours of our Church to be unſound in Faith, you ſtand oblig'd to prove, firſt, that the only Book you rely on, *viz. Lominus*, is *Authentick*, and to be Credited, notwithſtanding that the graveſt Teſtimonies in the Catholick Church (ſum'd up above) by their Carriage and expreſs Words have declar'd the direct contrary. And withal, you are to let us know particularly *who* it was that *Authenticated* that Book, who *Licenſed* or recommended it to the Preſs? What Printers, Authors, or Places *name* is to it; and to tell us the Reaſon *why* it was not *own'd*, or *allow'd* by Authority, being Printed in *Paris*, where the

the Laws enjoin all theſe particulars under great Penalties. And if it have not *theſe* Qualifications which honeſt Men may have, then you are to ſhew in what it differs from a *Libel*; as likewiſe to acquaint the World why you thought fit to rely on ſuch a Book to prove my Doctrin *Unſound*, rather than on the graveſt Authorities of all ſorts in the Roman Catholick Church, atteſting the contrary under their Hands ſo *publickly*. Next, you are to *diſprove* what has been *alledg'd* by me in the firſt Section of my *Fifth Catholick Letter*, to confute that Calumny; where ſuch a Concurrence of Reaſons and Teſtimonies are produc'd, that it would ſhame Impudence itſelf to conteſt it. And, laſtly, you are to ſatisfie the World how, if this were ſo, it could be poſſible that I ſhould now *ſtill* write and *maintain* the *ſame* Doctrin, and yet *no* Man, but your ſelves, *accuſe* me. If all this, which would convince even *Scepticiſm* itſelf, will not ſtop your Mouths, I offer your ſelf a Friendly meeting before ſome Perſons of Honour of both Communions; where I ſhall produce the well-atteſted Originals and Authentick Records (yet in my hands) belonging to that matter; which will ſhow you to your Eye what notorious Falſhoods you have Printed againſt me. Why ſhould you not, *if you have ſpoke Truth*, pull off your Vizard, and *appear* to *juſtifie* it? Why ſhould an *Honeſt* Man in an *Honeſt* Cauſe be ſo ſhy to *ſhew his Face*? Or, if the Conſciouſneſs of your Forgeries make you *aſham'd* to do it in your *own* Perſon, at leaſt appear by a Proxy. If all this will not keep you from obſtinately perſiſting to oppoſe *known Truths*, I can only ſay you are wilfully *poſſeſt* with a Spirit of *Lying*, and deſerve to be *Poſted*.

35. I am ſorry you woud Ineeds force me to uſe ſuch plain Language: Were your Demerits the Effects of

of Frailty, Humanity would teach me to compaſſionate them. But, being moſt perfectly Wilful and Wicked to boot, I ſhould wrong Truth and be unjuſt to my ſelf, if I had not call'd your Faults by their *own Ill Names*, and I have done no more. Pray deſire the Dr. and his Friends, for Truths ſake and their own Credit, that they will not ſo plainly convince the World, that they decline *Anſwering* and fall to *Bantering*; and withal aſſure them, that if they vainly hope to avail themſelves of *open Lyes*, I ſhall not want means both to *clear* my ſelf and *expoſe* them to the *Scorn* and *Shame* of Mankind. So wiſhing you heartily and charitably what you moſt need, *Sincerity*, I reſt

Your Humble Servant, *J. S.*

A Poſtſcript to the Readers.

Gentlemen,

YOU have here a ſhort Map of all the Controverſy between me and my Two Adverſaries, Dr. Stillingfleet and Dr. Tillotſon, Men of the Greateſt Repute at that time, and moſt univerſally exteem'd as the ableſt Men in England to defend the Proteſtant Cauſe. Obſerve, I beſeech you, that the Queſtion agitated between us is of the higheſt Concern; viz. of the Abſolute Certainty of Chriſtian Faith, which depends on the Certainty of the RULE, by means of which only it can come to our Knowledge, or be held Certainly True itſelf; As alſo that upon the Deciſion of this one point depends, conſequently, the Deciſion of all the Diſputes about Faith, and the End of all Controverſy, if 'tis manag'd, (as it ought) by Principles. For, if it be ſhown that the Roman Catholicks have and follow ſuch a Rule as aſcertains them abſolutely that the Faith they profeſs does come from Chriſt and his Apoſtles, they muſt be held to have the True Faith. On the contrary, that thoſe who diſclaim the having any ſuch Chriſtian Rule, nay, profeſs and maintain they have no ſuch Certain Rule as preſerves Chriſtian Faith from Poſſibility of Falſhood, or from being perhaps not True, cannot (ſince Chriſtian Faith muſt be held Certainly True; and muſt have a Rule or Ground to aſcertain it to be ſo) pretend with any ſhow of Reaſon to have True Faith. I beg of you to reflect that in the whole courſe of this Diſpute, I do only avail my ſelf by the ſtrength of my Reaſons; and how they, on the contrary, have endeavour'd to defend themſelves by little Rhetorical Tricks, Ironies, manifold Tergiverſations, and Subornation of perjured Witneſſes to ruin my Credit, and take away my Life. Laſtly, I deſire you to reflect that, never ſince the World ſtood, could any Controverſy be brought to a clearer iſſue, and more perfect Concluſion, than to offer to lay the ſtreſs of the whole Cauſe upon their bringing ſo much as one Argument to prove that by their Grounds all Chriſtian Faith might not poſſibly be falſe; or to anſwer one ſingle Argument my ſelf would bring to evince that, by their Principles, all Chriſtian Faith ought to be held poſſible to be Falſe, or not True. Which eaſie Task, conſcious they had no Principles to perform it, they never durſt attempt; nor did I ever hear one word from either of them, ſince I made them that Challenge; ſo that I have no more to ſay but Magna eſt veritas & prevalebit.

FINIS.